

Suffolk County Department of Social Services

OVERVIEW OF THE HOUSING DIVISION

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Emergency Housing

1

HOUSING DIVISION HAS 7 UNITS

1. PLACEMENT UNIT- locates suitable emergency housing for homeless singles and families (10)
2. REMOVALS UNIT- moves families out of emergency housing into permanent housing (4)
3. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION UNIT- works with families, individuals and landlords to settle disputes and prevent evictions (5)

2

HOUSING DIVISION HAS 7 UNITS

4. HOUSING INSPECTION UNIT- ensures that any move the agency participates in meets minimum health and safety standards (5)
5. 2 CASEWORKER UNITS – work with shelter providers and monitor families and singles in shelters (8)

3

HOUSING DIVISION HAS 7 UNITS

6. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION UNIT – gets homeless children registered back in school and arranges school bus transportation.(2)
7. FINANCE UNIT – verifies and authorizes all emergency housing payments. Includes taxi and school bus transportation payments.(4)

4

CURRENT CASELOAD

- Homeless Families – 410 families reside in emergency housing. Total of 1368 men, women and children.
- Homeless Singles– The Agency houses approximately 275 singles a night. 120 singles reside in long term shelters, while another 125 to 155 are placed by Emergency Services on a nightly basis.

5

HOMELESS SHELTERS

- Family Shelters – 46 congregate facilities, one tier II shelter and 19 scattered sites to accommodate larger families.
- Singles Shelters– There are 7 single shelters for adults: 5 for men and 2 for women.

6

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Emergency Services - uses 2 emergency shelters to meet the housing needs of the single adult who calls after regular business hours. 125 to 155 singles go through Emergency Services every night.

7

WHO ENTERS EMERGENCY HOUSING?

- 50% of the homeless families living in shelters are there for the first time. Most work and will leave as soon as they find affordable housing. (Short length of stay -1 to 2 months)

8

WHO ENTER EMERGENCY HOUSING?

- 30% of the homeless population in shelters have been homeless before. This group is not able to earn a wage high enough to maintain economic independence. (Average length of stay – 4 to 6 months)

9

WHO ENTERS EMERGENCY HOUSING?

- 20% of those living in emergency shelters are chronically homeless and are not capable of achieving self-sufficiency without supportive services. This population relies on Social Services to meet their basic needs. Most have a physical or mental disability or substance abuse problem. (In and out of emergency housing on a regular basis.)

10

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

****There is no available housing that is affordable for families/singles with low income.****

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2006, 85.7% of the residents on Long Island owned their own home. Suffolk County continues to issue building permits primarily for single family homes. The home owner vacancy rate measures only at 0.4%. (There are no single family homes available to rent)

11

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

- The cost of rental housing is among the highest in the nation. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development show that the monthly median rent for a two bedroom apartment in Suffolk for 2006 is \$1,350. Long Island has the highest median rent behind Westchester and is higher than N.Y.C. at \$1,222. The rental vacancy rate is 3.6%. (Very few apartments are available)

12

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

- It is impossible for clients in receipt of temporary assistance to find rentals at the standard shelter rate. For example, a TA family of four is entitled to a shelter allowance of \$503 per month.

13

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

- Many landlords will not rent to clients who are on assistance. A poor credit history or negative reference check or a history of drug/alcohol abuse or mental illness may cause rejection.

14

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

1. Housing Specialists - Shelter providers have been approved by DSS to hire "Housing Specialists" to develop housing resources and foster good relations with landlords. Many also provide after care to clients who move to permanent housing to avoid future problems.

15

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

2. Cash Security Payments – The Agency now issues double cash security to landlords who will not accept our security agreements.(This has proven to be a tremendous enticement for landlords to accept our clients)
3. HUD Section 8 Subsidies – DSS encourages all homeless families to apply for Section 8 vouchers.

16

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

4. Housing Casework Unit (6)
 - a.) The client must complete three housing search logs per week.
 - b.) The Independent Living Plan and the Assessment Referral are frequently reviewed to see if the client is completing established goals.
 - c.) Service referrals are made to CPS and APS based on the client's needs, to other departments within the Agency and outside organizations.

17

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

5. Homelessness Prevention Unit – provides services to singles and families who are homeless, but not yet in our shelters, or are at risk of becoming homeless.
 - Intercedes on client's behalf to resolve landlord / tenant disputes.
 - Recommends payment of rent arrears whenever possible to preserve the housing.

18

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

- Work with advocate groups – often will refer clients to legal services to prevent eviction.
- Work with community agencies, Section 8 and town code enforcement departments.
- Has established a positive relationship with many landlords in Suffolk County.

19

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

6. Sharp Lawsuit (1988)– History

Nassau/Suffolk Law Services filed a lawsuit on behalf of a homeless family on public assistance who was living in a motel and could not find permanent housing based on the rent allowance provided by the Agency. The end result was that the court agreed with the family and required the Agency to provide an additional rent supplement that would allow the family to obtain permanent housing.

20

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

- As families continued to apply to be part of the lawsuit to get the rent supplement, SCDSS and N/S Law Services developed an informal arrangement to avoid having to go to court on each case.
- For the past 22 years this plan has proved to be quite successful in getting families out of emergency housing into a permanent home.

21

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

HOW TO QUALIFY FOR SHARP

1. Families must be living in emergency housing.
2. Must be receiving financial assistance under the Family Assistance category (60 month time limit under welfare reform)
3. All household members must be in full compliance with TA regulations. (No sanctions)

22

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- 4. Families must first apply to be part of the lawsuit at Nassau/Suffolk Law Services.
- 5. Once the application is filed, the client becomes part of the pending lawsuit and a client of Law Services.
- 6. N/S Law Services notifies the Removals Unit of Housing that the client has applied for Sharp.
- 7. The client then submits a housing package to Housing

23

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- 8. Acceptable rental amounts based on family size are agreed to between N/S Law Services, the County attorney and DSS.
- 9. There are no established rates. Each rental amount that is approved is determined on a case by case basis.
- 10. Any request to move that requires a rent supplement, broker's fee, security, furniture or moving expense must pass inspection.

24

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- 11. If the house passes inspection and the rent is agreed upon, the client can move in.
- 12. All rent payments are restricted and sent directly to the landlord.
- 13. The rent supplement is terminated if the client is sanctioned for not complying with agency regulations.

25

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SHARP

- The Sharp Intervener process is not part of a program or DSS regulation. It is still a pending lawsuit since 1988.
- There are no written guidelines. Eligibility is determined on a case by case basis.
- If a Sharp request is denied, the client is not eligible for a fair hearing.

26

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SHARP

- Any requests for a rent increase must first be submitted to N/S Law Services.
- If a family member is added or deleted from the case, Law Services must be notified as this could affect the rent supplement.
- Any other changes in household composition or health and safety issues should be directed to the Agency.

27

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

7. THE HOLMES LAWSUIT-1989

- Applies to TA families who reside in permanent housing but are facing eviction for non payment of rent because the shelter allowance is too low.
- The court ordered that rent arrears over the shelter standard can be paid to prevent homelessness and that a shelter supplement can be approved.

28

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- Families that are receiving financial assistance and have fallen behind in their rent should first contact N/S Law Services to apply to become part of the Holmes Lawsuit.
- The same eligibility requirements that apply to the Sharp Lawsuit apply to Holmes.
- The Housing Division will process all Holmes requests. They will discuss each case with N/S Law Services and attempt to preserve the housing.

29

- **Nassau/Suffolk Law Services**
- **1757-50 Vets. Highway**
- **Islandia, N.Y. 11722**
- **(631) 232-2400**

30

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

8. THE SHELTER SUPPLEMENT

- Suffolk County DSS obtained approval from New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to administer a Shelter Supplement program on March 15, 2004.
- This plan is designed to enable families to find permanent housing or retain their permanent housing by providing a rent allowance equal to double the current shelter standard with children.

31

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- In addition, the client is also able to contribute a portion of the basic allowance from their grant toward the rent. Contributions range from \$100 to \$300 depending on family size.
- Adults with no children are not eligible for the program.
- FA and Safety Net families are eligible to apply for the rent supplement.

32

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Shelter Supplement Rents

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TA Shelter Allow.	310	358	447	503	560	586	611
Multiply	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2
Double Rent	620	716	894	1006	1120	1172	1222
Client Contrib.	100	150	200	200	200	300	300
Total	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rent	720	866	1094	1206	1320	1472	1522

33

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS NOT ON ASSISTANCE

1. Required to pay a prorated share of the rent. That amount is subtracted from the actual cost of the rent.
2. A family of four with a rent of \$1200 with a household member not on assistance would be required to pay \$300 a month directly to the landlord for rent.

34

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- EXAMPLE: Household of 4. Three are on assistance, one household member is not.
- Actual Rent 1,200
- Non TA member must pay $\frac{1}{4}$ - 300
- Client's actual rent now = 900
- Shelter standard for 3 on TA = 447
- Double shelter standard = 447
- Sub total = 894
- Client must contribute basic allowance + 6 (max 200) = 900

35

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- HOUSEHOLDS WITH AN SSI MEMBER
- Persons with SSI income are not on assistance
- SSI household member must contribute 30% of their income toward the actual rent.
- If an SSI household member received \$690 per month, he would have to contribute \$207 toward the rent. It would be his responsibility to send the rent directly to the landlord.

36

PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

- EXAMPLE: family of four with one person on SSI
- Actual rent 1,200
- 30% SSI contribution - 207
- Client's actual rent now = 993
- Shelter standard for 3 = 447
- Double shelter standard= 447
- Sub total = 894
- Client must contribute + 99 (max 200)
- = 993

37

NEW EMERGENCY SHELTER ALLOWANCE FOR AIDS/HIV RELATED ILLNESS

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

1. *ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBER WITH A DOCUMENTED MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS OF AIDS OR HIV RELATED ILLNESS AND FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDING WITH SUCH PERSON.*

38

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ESA?

2. FAMILY MUST BE HOMELESS OR FACING HOMELESSNESS.
3. EMERGENCY SHELTER ALLOWANCE IS AVAILABLE USING THE ACTUAL MONTHLY RENT.
4. ONLY THE SSI INCOME OF ONE PERSON WITH AIDS CAN BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY.

39

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- 5. AIDS PERSON IS STILL ELIGIBLE EVEN IF NOT RECEIVING SSI.
- 6. AGENCY CAN NO LONGER COUNT THE INCOME OF OTHER SSI HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS, THEY REMAIN INVISIBLE. ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO DO NOT GET SSI ARE INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY.

40

ESA BUDGET EXAMPLE

- MOM AND 4 CHILDREN APPLY FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER ALLOWANCE.
- MOM IS HIV+ AND GETS SSI - \$660
- NONE OF HER CHILDREN GET SSI.
- ACTUAL RENT IS \$2,400.
- THERE IS NO OTHER INCOME IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

41

BUDGET FOR FIVE

- BASIC ALLOWANCE = 426.00
- ENERGY = 47.70
- HEAP = 37.00
- RENT = 2,400.00
- FUEL ALLOWANCE = 77.00
- NEEDS = 2,987.70
- SSI INCOME = -660.00
- EMER.SHELT.AMT = 2,327.70

42

ESA BUDGET EXAMPLE #2

- MOM AND 2 CHILDREN
- MOM AND 1 CHILD. EACH HAVE AIDS AND BOTH GET SSI
- 2ND CHILD DOES NOT HAVE AIDS OR GET SSI
- THE SSI MOM AND 2ND CHILD ARE APPLYING FOR ESA.
- THE SSI INCOME OF THE 1ST CHILD IS NOT COUNTED AND THE CHILD IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET.

43

ESA BUDGET FOR 2 mom+1child

- BASIC = 201.00
- ENERGY = 22.50
- HEAP = 17.00
- SHELTER = 1,500.00
- FUEL = 70.00
- NEEDS = 1,810.50
- SSI INCOME = - 660.00
- EM.SH.ALLOW = 1,150.50

44

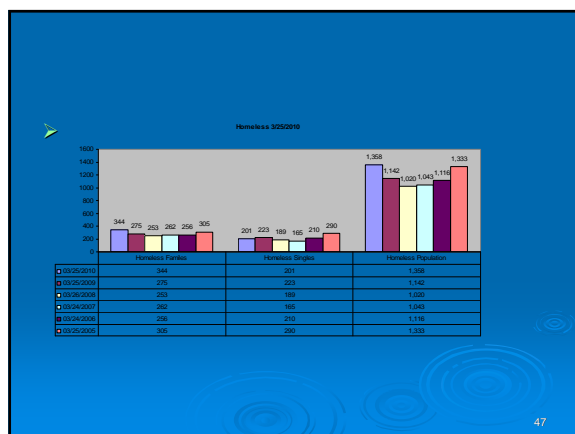
ESA BUDGET EXAMPLE #3

- FATHER AND SON APPLY FOR ESA
- FATHER IS HIV+ AND GETS SSI
- SON IS HIV+ BUT DOES NOT GET SSI.
- IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFIT, WE WILL BUDGET THE CHILD WHO HAS A DIAGNOSIS OF HIV AND NO INCOME.
- THE FATHER'S INCOME IS NOT COUNTED AND HE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET.

45

<u>ESA BUDGET #3</u>		
<u>HIV SON NO INCOME</u>		
➤ BASIC	=	126. 00
➤ ENERGY	=	14. 10
➤ HEAP	=	11. 00
➤ SHELTER	=	850. 00
➤ FUEL	=	70.00
➤ NEEDS	=	1,071.10
➤ SSI INCOME	=	000. 00
➤ EM.SH.ALLOW.	=	850.00
➤ MONTHLY	=	221. 00 CASH

46



47

<u>PROGRAMS TO HELP THE HOMELESS</u>	
<u>SUMMARY</u>	
➤ I have presented you with some of the steps the Housing Division has taken to prevent homelessness, or if already homeless, to get families into permanent housing.	
➤ The seven units within our Division all have the same goal in mind - to house those in need and help them reclaim their lives by providing a stable residence.	
➤ Our efforts seem to be working. We have been able to reduce the number of homeless families from 580 in June 2003 to 280 in July of 2009.	

48

